



ANNUAL REPORT 1959

OF THE SPECIAL SERVICES
AFTER-CARE SUB-COMMITTEE

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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REPORT OF THE
SPECIAL SERVICES AFTER-CARE
SUB-COMMITTEE
FOR THE YEAR 1959

E. L. RUSSELL, *Chief Education Officer*

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SERVICES AFTER-CARE SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1959

MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL SERVICES AFTER-CARE SUB-COMMITTEE

COUNCILLOR MRS. F. M. SMALLWOOD (Chairman).	Miss D. E. NEWMAN.
COUNCILLOR MRS. E. SMITHERMAN (Member of Education Committee).	Mr. S. S. ALDERSON
COUNCILLOR MRS. H. L. RADFORD (Member of Education Committee and Health [Mental Health Sub- Committee]).	Miss F. A. BARLOW (resigned 30.4.59)
Miss J. DAVID (Member of Education Committee).	Mr. B. C. BUCKLEY.
MRS. D. M. FISHER (Member of Education Committee).	Miss D. M. EDWARDS.
	Mr. G. W. EVANS.
	Mr. G. H. MEEK.
	Miss B. M. SMITH.
	Mr. A. E. TANSLEY, B.Sc., M.Ed.
	Miss G. L. VAUGHAN.

AFTER-CARE STAFF

After-Care Officer	Mrs. J. M. FULFORD, B.A.
After-Care Visitors	Mrs. H. K. FINCH.
	Miss S. D. BIBBY, M.A.
	Mrs. K. WILLIAMS.
	Miss L. SMITH.
	Mrs. B. PRYCE, B.Com. (resigned 31.12.59)

JUNIOR SPECIAL TRAINING CENTRE STAFF

Organiser of Special Training Centres	Miss N. L. CHRISTIE (from September 1959)
Supervisor, Erdington	Miss W. M. LUCK.
„ Glebe Farm	Miss M. L. BEINDER.
„ Kingstanding	Miss O. M. WOOLLEY.
„ St. Oswald's	} Mrs. G. CASSELLS (from January 1959)
„ (closed Apr. '59)	
„ Hobmoor	
„ (Opened May, '59)	Miss E. LAMB
„ St. Paul's	Mrs. M. HILL.
„ Weoley Castle	Mrs. E. A. COOKSEY.
„ Wretham Road.....	

SPECIAL TRAINING CENTRES FOR SENIOR BOYS

Supervisor, Bell Barn	Mr. R. C. SLACK.
„ Moseley Road	Mr. J. E. LAMB.

FOR SENIOR GIRLS

Supervisor, Bell Barn	Mrs. M. B. BUSBY.
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CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Special Services After-Care Sub-Committee

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1959

INTRODUCTION

The Special Services After-Care Sub-Committee of the City Education Committee have pleasure in presenting their fifty-ninth annual report. There was no change during the year in the work carried on by the officers on behalf of the Committee; and, as in former years, this fell broadly into two divisions. In the first place, the children under school age who have been reported incapable of education at school are visited in their homes by the After-Care staff and in appropriate cases training in special training centres is provided for them. Some of those who are unfit to go to a centre are trained at home by a visiting home teacher. In the second place, all leavers from the schools for educationally subnormal children, and a number from other special schools, are visited regularly for the first few years after they have left. In the visiting of children reported incapable of education at school, in the organisation of special training centres, and in the visiting of the leavers reported to the local health authority for supervision, the work is carried on by the City Education Committee as agents of the City Health Committee.

VISITING

There were 241 new cases during 1959. The total number under supervision during the year was 1,802.

As explained in the report for 1957, young people are now reviewed by their visitors between the ages of 18 and 21 and those who are ready are recommended for discharge by the After-Care "Case" Sub-Committee. Those who are thought to require continued visiting are transferred to the supervision of the Health Committee's visitors at the age of 21 or earlier. Those discharged in 1959 are shown in Table II (J) and analysed into age groups in Table III: those transferred to the supervision of the Health Committee are shown in Table II (K). The transfer or discharge of older men and women was nearly completed by the end of 1959.

The After-Care Visitors have found through experience that the first contact with a family is of the greatest importance. In cases of school leavers, Visitors attend the Choice of Employment conferences arranged by Youth Employment Officers during pupils' last term at school and frequently meet children and parents there. Although the reorganisation of visiting has resulted in a smaller number of cases for

each officer it is still not possible for them to visit as often as they would wish; if a friendly relationship is established the family will often get into touch with the visitors' office if they need advice or a special visit.

It is not always fully appreciated how much more difficult their mental immaturity makes things for special school pupils when they come to leave school. They have to make the adjustment not only to the new routines of going to work but also to a different life at home. Leavers from boarding special schools have to get used to living all the time with the families from whom they were removed in term-time. Many of these young people are solitary by temperament and if the visitor feels that they would benefit from belonging to a youth club they are encouraged to join. After they have left school some leavers become more aware of the disadvantages of poor reading and writing; in such cases visitors will give them particulars of classes held in the evenings at special schools or at institutes of further education.

Some of the leavers settle well in work and remain in the same job for a fair time. Others make a number of changes and Youth Employment Officers and After-Care Visitors may have great difficulty in helping them to settle. In order to help a boy or girl who is shy and unable to speak up for himself the visitor will sometimes accompany him to a firm for an interview. If there is prolonged difficulty, there are some employers known to visitors who will go out of their way to give a mentally or physically handicapped young person as good an opportunity as possible to find his feet at work. The Committee are specially grateful for their consideration. It is still found difficult to persuade some young people that if they are unemployed they must "sign on" at the Employment Exchange so as to qualify for benefit or assistance and to be exempt from paying insurance contributions.

When a visitor goes to the home of a young child, the mother may be glad of advice in training her child in the performance of certain simple tasks, in clean habits, and in feeding and dressing himself, so that he is more independent at home and can be considered for a training centre. If the child is either very severely handicapped or difficult in behaviour the parents are usually glad of an opportunity to talk about their problems. The visitor may be able to help the family in some need, such as a special chair for a physically handicapped child, by putting the family into touch with the agency which can supply it. In cases of genuine financial hardship the visitor may be able to obtain a grant for the family from a voluntary agency for furniture or clothing and to help the family to spend it to the best advantage; for example, a boy from a very poor home who had attended a boarding school was granted money to buy clothes for starting work; and a young mother deserted by her husband was given money for a child's clothing; a visitor accompanied both purchasers.

The visitors see in the centres the children whose homes they visit. This enables them to watch a child's progress in the centre and to compare it with the parents' opinions. The supervisor may be glad to have some problem discussed with a family or to ask for a home to be visited when a child is known to be sick or is absent for an unknown reason. From time

to time a visitor will be able to help a mother by asking the supervisor to watch and encourage some new achievement of her child or to pay particular attention to some special difficulty.

EMPLOYMENT

Of the men and boys under supervision in 1959, 56% were gainfully employed; of the women and girls, 46%. The comparable figures in 1958 were 66% of the men and 43% of the women. These figures do not mean that there were fewer suitable jobs to be had. Rather more young men were discharged before the age of 21 so that a rather higher proportion (of those who were left) were not capable of employment.

FACTORS IN DEVELOPMENT

One of the main aims of the After-Care Service is to follow up the support given to subnormal boys and girls who have completed their education at Special Schools and to give them, in their immediately post-school years, the extra help that may enable them to become useful and happy citizens. Visits to their homes and knowledge of their environments and of their histories provoke the questions: What are the formative influences that shape their development? What parts are played by home and school? These questions are sometimes answered by generalisations which take for granted either too much or too little. A request for facts is frequently met by the citation of case-histories. Case-histories, however, contain very many variables and, in any case, individuals vary so widely that a suitable case-history can be found to support almost any generalisation. It was thought that it might be useful to consider a small sample of special school leavers by statistical methods and without setting out to prove any particular thesis.

The sample consisted of 54 young people (21 girls and 33 youths) who left special schools (10 of them boarding schools) at Easter 1957; they were then aged between fifteen-and-a-half and sixteen and-a-quarter.

The variables which have been considered were:—

Home conditions

Intelligence

School work (i.e. attainments)

Adjustment at school (i.e. to other pupils and to staff)

Number of jobs (in the three years since they left school)

Social adjustment (after leaving school)

Assessment under these heads are, of course, to some extent subjective. This is true especially for home conditions and social adjustment after leaving school; however, each assessment was made on the basis of reports from an After-Care Visitor over a period of three years and these reports were collated by one officer (the After-Care Officer) to whom the Visitors' work is well-known; this should make the assessments fairly reliable. The factors considered in making the assessment under each heading were as follows.

Home Conditions

These were classified as Good, Average, or Poor and account was taken of cleanliness, furnishing and domestic amenities, clothing, household management, overcrowding, domestic relationships, scanty or excessive parental control, moral atmosphere, any record of offences, and other special circumstances such as fostering, a very old or very young parent, and the like.

The composition of the sample was as follows:—

<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
21	17	16

Intelligence

The intelligence quotations used were obtained by a qualified and experienced educational psychologist using the revised Terman Merrill test in fifty-one cases and the W.I.S.C. test in the other three, but they are not recent; most of them were obtained when the child went to his last (special) school between the ages of 9 and 12 and this, of course, somewhat diminishes their reliability. The composition of the sample was as follows:—

<i>Intelligence Quotient</i>	<i>No. of Cases</i>
50—54	4
55—59	7
60—64	14
65—69	14
70—74	10
75—79	4
80—84	0
85—89	1
<i>Mean I.Q. 64.7</i>	54

School Work

Attainments in school work were classified as Good, Average, or Poor on the basis of school records and reports. The standards of the different schools (most of them special schools for educationally sub-normal pupils in Birmingham) are not likely to have varied excessively.

The composition of the sample was as follows:—

<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
18	29	7

Adjustments at School

Adjustment to other children and to staff at school was classified as Good, Average, or Poor, also on the basis of school records and reports.

The composition of the sample was as follows:—

<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
38	14	2

Number of Jobs

This means the number of jobs in three years since leaving school.

The composition of the sample was as follows:—

<i>Number of Jobs</i>	<i>Number of Cases</i>
1	13
2	14
3	9
4	4
5	1
6	5
7	1
8	3
9	1
10 (or more)	3

Social Adjustment (after leaving school)

This was classified as Good, Average, or Poor on the basis of Visitors' reports. Account was taken of ability to make satisfactory relationships in and out of home, spare time activities and interests, manner and bearing, appearance and care in dress, any offences, and general social maturity.

The composition of the sample was as follows:—

<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
21	24	9

As already stated, this survey is chiefly concerned with the young people's social adjustment after leaving school and with their stability in employment. These are connected. If we classify the young people according to their social adjustment and then look at the number of jobs which they held in three years, their correlation is obvious.

TABLE "A"

	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Social Adjustment.....	21	24	9
Average No. of Jobs	2.1	3.6	5.4

Let us now take Social Adjustment and consider what connection, if any there appears to be with:

Intelligence,
School work,
Adjustment at school,
and Home conditions.

TABLE "B"

		<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
<i>Social Adjustment</i>		21	24	9
Average I.Q.		67.3	65.0	65.6
School Work	{ Good	33 %	42 %	11 %
	{ Average	57 %	54 %	44 %
	{ Poor	10 %	4 %	44 %
		<u>100 %</u>	<u>100 %</u>	<u>100 %</u>
Adjustment at school	{ Good	76 %	75 %	33 %
	{ Average	14 %	25 %	66 %
	{ Poor	10 %	0 %	0 %
		<u>100 %</u>	<u>100 %</u>	<u>100 %</u>
Home Conditions	{ Good	52 %	33 %	22 %
	{ Average	19 %	38 %	44 %
	{ Poor	29 %	29 %	33 %
		<u>100 %</u>	<u>100 %</u>	<u>100 %</u>

There seems to be a correlation between poor social adjustment after leaving school (though we are only considering nine cases of it) and poor school attainments; and also, perhaps between poor social adjustment after leaving school and relatively poor adjustment at school (none of the nine are classified as "poor"—most children settle fairly well in a special school—but there are fewer "goods" among those whose social adjustment after leaving school was poor). Social adjustment after leaving school and home conditions show less correlation than might be expected. Social adjustment after leaving school and I.Q. (some years earlier) show virtually no correlation.

Secondly, let us see how many jobs on average were held in three years by young people of varying I.Q.s, school attainments, adjustment with others at school and home conditions.

TABLE "C"

	<i>Higher</i> (70—89)	<i>Middle</i> (60—69)	<i>Lower</i> (50—59)
Intelligence Quotients	15	28	11
Average number of Jobs	3.6	3.03	4.4
	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
School Work	18	29	7
Average number of Jobs	3	3.3	5.4
	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Adjustment at school	38	14	2
Average number of Jobs	3.2	4.3	2
	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Home Conditions	21	17	16
Average number of Jobs	2.3	3.9	4.5

Stability in employment seems to depend importantly, as one would expect, on home conditions but not to be correlated, in this small sample at any rate, with adjustment in the sheltered community of a special school. Attainments at school seem to have more bearing than do intelligence quotients on stability at work.

On the whole this analysis does not do very much more than confirm what commonsense and experience would lead us to expect. If it did, we might be wise to suspect our figures. They may serve to warn us against the dangers of over-simplification and facile generalisation and to remind us of the importance of each one of the many contributors to a child's development; of parents, in giving children who specially need it a good and secure home; of teachers, in helping them to be happy members of the school's society, and to make the best of their capacities at school; of Youth Employment Officers, in helping them to find the right jobs and to settle down to them; of After-Care Visitors, as the guides, philosophers, and friends which they try to be; and of others whose contributions could not be fitted into this narrow statistical framework. Any one of their contributions may turn the precarious scales between a useful and a happy life and one which is a burden both to the young man or woman and to the community at large.

SPECIAL TRAINING CENTRES

The Committee continued to maintain seven mixed junior centres and three senior centres, one for girls and two for boys and men. The only change in 1959 was the closure of St. Oswald's Junior Centre and its replacement by the new Hobmoor Centre, much better housed in Hobmoor Community Centre, Small Heath.

At the end of 1959 a total of 251 severely subnormal children were attending the junior centres and there was a waiting list of 57. A total of 174 adolescents and adults were attending the senior centres; of these 110 attended part-time only; the waiting list at the end of the year was 51. The long waiting-time for admission remains, therefore, a serious problem.

The new centres which have been planned are urgently needed not only because they will be bigger and absorb these waiting lists, but also because they will be better. Much good work is being done in the existing centres but it is impossible to isolate the very low grade and the occasional psychotic child from the majority of subnormal children who are capable of training; it is also impossible to divide the children satisfactorily into groups according to their capacities and needs and this makes it difficult to organise a satisfactory progression in their training.

One assistant supervisor was seconded with salary to attend the 1959/60 one-year course of the National Association for Mental Health, in accordance with the policy of the Health and Education Committees to build up the proportion of qualified staff.

The main need of severely subnormal children and adolescents is for greater personal and social competence and the main aims of the training in all the centres, junior and senior, is to help each of them to become as independent and as socially adaptable as their mental, and perhaps physical handicaps allow. The training aims at improving motor co-ordination, alertness, concentration, and good habits of work, and seeks to give to each the simple knowledge needed in daily life. It includes, therefore, many kinds of physical activity, sense training, simple handicrafts, basic speech training, and, for some, the simple use of numbers. In the senior girls' centre handwork and crafts are extended to include domestic subjects. What the normal child takes for granted has to be painstakingly learned by the severely subnormal child and the need to present basic knowledge and competence in new and interesting ways is a constant challenge to the patience and ingenuity of the staff. All work has to be broken down into sequences so that the child may understand each step, in the hope that he may one day achieve the whole progression by himself. Progress is slow and is measured in years rather than in months.

During the year there have been opportunities for members of the Sub-Committee, parents, and others to visit various centres on open days. Some idea of the work of the centres was given by showing the apparatus used and things which the children had made; on some occasions simple displays were given by the children themselves.

Each centre had its own outing to the country or the sea-side and the usual Christmas parties and visits to the pantomime or the circus. Three parties went once more to Windmill House for a week's holiday, and two parties, one from the senior girls centre and one from a Junior centre went for a week to a boarding house at Rhyl, and to a Methodist Holiday Hostel at Fairbourne. In the case of these sea-side holidays the cost was borne partly by the Health Committee and partly by the parents.

TRAINING AT HOME

Sixty-five children were visited, for about an hour a week each, by the four home teachers. Most of them (46) were juniors who were not yet ready to attend existing centres, who were on the waiting list, or who were too severely handicapped to attend; in 6 cases, parents were reluctant to allow them to attend the present centres. 19 of the 65 were of an age to attend senior centres but were unable to do so because of severe physical handicap or generally poor health; the new centre for boys and men in the Aldridge Road is to have a special unit which some of them will be able to attend.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The After-Care Sub-Committee and their officers would like once again to offer their thanks to their many colleagues and friends who share their faith in their work, help in its execution, and contribute to its success.

TABLE I
SUMMARY OF CASES ON VISITING LIST DURING 1959

	A		B		C		D		E		F		
	At home and not gainfully employed	F.	At home and not gainfully employed	F.	In H.M. Forces	F.	In Homes and Hospitals	F.	In Prison, Borstal or Approved School	F.	M.	F.	Total, categories A—E M. and F.
1. Reported (on leaving school) during 1959 for Supervision:													
(1) Voluntary	65	65	11	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	76	78	154
(2) Statutory	9	5	8	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	17	7	24
2. Reported (on leaving school) before 1959 for Supervision:													
(1) Voluntary	343	170	16	52*	7	—	6	3	22	1	394	226	620
(2) Statutory	156	98	21	60*	—	—	12	10	8	—	197	168	365
3. Excluded from school during 1959	—	—	32	24	—	—	—	—	—	—	32	24	56
4. Excluded from school before 1959	26	5	297	223	—	—	19	12	1	—	343	240	583
5. Totals, 1959	599	343	385	374	7	—	37	25	31	1	1059	743	1802
6. Totals, 1958	843	392	449	437	14	—	36	29	27	2	1369	860	2229

*In Line 2, Col.B(F), "52" includes 34 engaged in household duties and "60" includes 37 so engaged.

TABLE II
SUMMARY OF CASES REMOVED FROM VISITING LIST IN 1959

	G		H		J		K		L		M		N		P		
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	Total, categories G—N
1. Reported (on leaving school) during 1959 for Supervision (1) Voluntary (2) Statutory	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 3
2. Reported (on leaving school) before 1959 for Supervision (1) Voluntary (2) Statutory	1 9	1 1	7 3	6 6	113 156	49 75	1 53	— 24	3 1	—	— 2	— 1	—	—	125 224	56 107	181 331
3. Excluded from school during 1959	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	3
4. Excluded from school before 1959	11	9	—	1	28	6	47	41	3	5	1	2	—	1	90	65	155
5. Totals, 1959	26	12	10	14	297	130	101	65	7	5	3	3	—	1	444	230	674
6. Totals, 1958	32	38	10	12	408	305	180	194	8	10	5	4	—	2	643	565	1208

TABLE III

(See Table II, Columns "J" and "N")

CASES DISCHARGED IN 1959 AS NOT NEEDING FURTHER SUPERVISION

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Stat. Cases</i>		<i>Vol. Cases</i>		<i>Excluded Cases</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
21 years or less	35	33	72	31	1	3	108	67
22—26 years	88	28	26	10	16	2	130	40
27—35 years	20	5	10	3	6	2	36	10
Over 35 years	13	9	5	5	5	—	23	14
TOTAL	156	75	113	49	28	7	297	131

TABLE IV

(See Table II, Column "L")

DIED IN 1959

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Statutory</i>		<i>Voluntary</i>		<i>Excluded</i>	
	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
16 years & Under	—	—	1	—	2	4
17—21 years	—	—	—	—	1	—
22—30 years	—	—	2	—	—	—
30—50 years	—	—	—	—	—	1
Over 50 years	1	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	1	—	3	—	3	5

The causes of death were as follows:

- 1 from general physical deterioration
- 4 following pneumonia
- 2 following pneumonia and meningitis
- 1 following pneumonia and measles
- 1 following kidney disease
- 1 from acute dysentery
- 1 from carcinoma
- 1 from bronchitis

TABLE V

TYPE OF WORK FOLLOWED BY THOSE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

<i>Type of Work</i>	<i>Under Voluntary Supervision after leaving school</i>		<i>Under Statutory Supervision after leaving school</i>		<i>Under Statutory Supervision after having been excluded from school</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
Assembling and Packing	19	56	6	14	2	1	27	71
Bakeries, Breweries and Food Manufacture	17	32	3	15	2	3	22	50
Boot Repairing	15	—	2	—	—	—	17	—
Building and Decorating	35	—	24	—	—	—	59	—
Cinema and Entertainments	3	3	3	3	—	—	6	6
Clerical Work	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Delivery and Sales	31	2	10	1	—	—	41	3
Factory Work	151	70	65	47	8	—	224	117
Farming and Gardening Groundsman	7	1	4	—	2	—	13	1
Hotel, Cafe and Canteen Work	6	10	—	3	1	—	7	13
Domestic work, Sewing	1	25	—	8	—	—	1	33
Public Services, Gas, Electricity, Transport, Salvage, etc.	4	—	8	—	2	—	14	—
Laundry	2	5	—	3	1	—	3	8
Outwork—Remploy	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Warehouse	21	7	4	5	—	—	25	12
Woodwork	19	—	2	—	1	—	22	—
Window Cleaning	2	—	1	—	—	—	3	—
Porters, Labourers and Odd Jobs	47	5	29	—	7	1	83	1
Maintenance	9	—	1	—	—	—	10	—
Miscellaneous, Jewellery, Upholstery, etc.	19	18	3	3	—	—	22	21
TOTALS	408	235	165	103	26	5	599	343

